



Super Saturday Fitness Club Fighting Childhood Obesity

Over the last three decades, the childhood obesity rate has more than doubled for pre-school children. In Newark, NJ, one in every five children is now considered obese.

To help combat the obesity epidemic among the youth of our inner-cities, NCC's Community Hills Early Learning Center recently started a Super Saturday Fitness Club featuring activities like gymnastics, bowling and basketball.

"I chose for my daughter to attend this program because exercise is very important. It's a great way to help them grow strong and healthy," said parent Denise Jackson.

The program, run by teachers from the center, is open to toddlers and children through the age of 5. Enrollment in the center is not a requirement to participate.

"We are volunteering our time because we want to make sure that our children grow to have healthy minds and bodies. We are really committed to our children," explained Nyonontee Jackman, one of the teachers who is running the program.

Although there is currently a minimal charge, Jackman said all the proceeds are put back into the club or used for other programs based at Community Hills. The teachers and administration believe it is important to start fighting obesity early in life because children who are overweight or obese are at increased risk of health problems such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and asthma.

"Yes, the children are having a lot of fun when they come here, but what they don't realize is that they are also helping to ensure that they have a healthy future," said Carolyn Lowe, another teacher involved with the Super Saturday Fitness Club.

The club's establishment follows a visit last year to Newark by First Lady Michelle Obama, who encouraged exercise and healthy eating as part of her national campaign against childhood obesity.

Chelsea Adams, 5, one of the young participants in the Super Saturday Fitness Club, said she looks forward to attending every week.

"I like the Wii because you can hula

PIETY

"A constant attention to the work which God entrusts us with is a mark of solid piety."

John Wesley

"Wherever the fear of God rules in the heart, it will appear both in words of charity and piety, and neither will excuse us from the other."

Matthew Henry

"Faith is never identical with piety."

Karl Barth

"Suspect everything that is prosperous unless it promotes piety and charity and humility."

Isaac Taylor

"For though we love both the truth and our friends, piety requires us to honor the truth first."

Aristotle

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Fighting Childhood Obesity, cont'd....

hoop with Dora and run with everybody!" she said.

Nhandi Nyawela, 4, said she likes doing "back flips on the ball."

"Nhandi seems to enjoy the program," said her mother, Paula Green. "As a health conscious parent, I particularly like activities that promote healthy lifestyles for kids. I also appreciate the healthy organic snacks that are given to the children."

Contributed by Nyonontee Jackman

SUCCESS STORY: JAWAN PERINE



Jawan Perine, in foreground, empties some lobster risotto onto a plate.

For as long as he can remember, Jawan Perine has been fascinated by cooking.

"I was a little, chubby, kid so I always ate. I was watching cooking shows since I was 8 or 9 and cooking since I was 12," he said. "I would write down recipes from the t.v. and give it to my mom or start trying to cook it myself."

A 2005 graduate of the New Community School of Culinary Arts in Newark, Perine is now a chef at Legal Sea Foods, a popular, upscale, restaurant located in the Short Hills Mall. The restaurant's entrees include dishes like lobster risotto, double stuffed shrimp, baked scrod and stuffed flounder.

"The customers are very, very particular. You also have to be conscious of allergies and be ready to make modifications to a dish to fit the individual's needs," he said.

Eric Wiggins, the sous chef at the restaurant, called Perine a "hard worker" with a "great attitude."

"He's a great asset to our team," he said.

Perine, 25, who has worked at Legal Sea Foods for over a year, credits the training he received at the New Community School of Culinary Arts with helping to prepare him for his current position.

"I loved the school. I learned a lot of things and really got my speed up."

CENTER FINDING HELP FOR THE NEEDY

Janet Wheeler had recently moved into her own Newark apartment, but still had no furniture. An unemployed security officer who is currently on welfare assistance, she was also having a difficult time putting food on the table.

Through NCC's Family Service Bureau, where Wheeler's teenage daughter was undergoing counseling, Wheeler was referred to the NCC Family Resource Success Center.

Within days, the center had arranged for several weeks worth of emergency food supplies to be delivered to Wheeler's apartment. Clothing was also donated. She was also put in touch with NJ Shares, a program that provides help in paying utility bills.

Wheeler, 45, was also personally transported by NCC staff to a warehouse run by Furniture Assist, an outreach that provides free furniture, appliances and other household items to families or individuals in need.

"I got a living room set, end tables, lamps, chairs," Wheeler said, naming some of the items she selected. "Everything was just pouring in to help me. I am so grateful to New Community for directing me to these other programs."

Joann Williams-Swiney, director of the Family Resource Success Center, said the center served over 4,000 clients in 2010, noting that individuals who were in need of help with multiple issues was not out of the ordinary.

"We are the place people come to when they don't know where else to turn," she said. "Fortunately, New Community has lots of resources to help them within our own network and we can also direct them to other services and programs when necessary."



An exterior view of The Family Resource Success Center.

LOYOLA STUDENTS SPEND SPRING BREAK AT NEW COMMUNITY



Students from Loyola University in Maryland are shown with Monsignor William J. Linder, far right, founder, president and CEO of New Community Corp.

While many of their peers were spending Spring Break relaxing, nearly a dozen students from Loyola University in Maryland were volunteering their time helping seniors, school children and families as part of an outreach at New Community Corp. in Newark.

The students, accompanied by a faculty advisor, occupied two empty apartments in one of NCC's senior buildings during their stay and during the week abstained from television, use of cell phones and computers as a way of zeroing in on their purpose of building relationships with those around them. Not only did the students have fun, but they left Newark amazed at all they had witnessed when it comes to the efforts of New Community to improve quality of life in New Jersey's largest city.

"The mission is absolutely incredible and it takes a lot of people to make it happen," said Kristie Ferraro, a Loyola sophomore. "At every level, you have to be driven. I met so many dedicated people."

Betty Lawson, administrator of the New Community Extended Care Center, said her residents really enjoyed the visit from the Loyola students.

"The students bring a lot to our residents," she said. "They love to interact with the younger generation."

New Parenting Group

"A Village of Caring" is a new parenting group meeting weekly at New Community's Family Resource Success Center. In the group, parents recognize and take responsibility for their problems, develop solutions and serve as role models for other parents.

By creating a strong sense of community, parents are able to lend and receive support from other group members, helping to strength their families.

"No one gives you a manual about parenting to tell you how to do this or that," said Trudelle Wilson, a married mother of four children who is part of the group.

Syeda White, who is just 26 and a single parent of three children all under the age of five, said she realizes sharing with others can help.

"Everybody goes through different things and different problems," she said. "I'm not the type of person who usually likes to talk, but I know there is still a lot I can learn."

Joann Williams-Swiney, director of the Family Resource Success Center, said the group-which has two facilitators- is giving parents a positive outlet.

"They are helping each other find solutions to their problems," she said.

The parenting group meets every Thursday at 5 p.m. For more information, please call the center at 973 565-9500.



Meeting during the Village of Caring new parenting group, from left, are Virginia Johnson, Delores Smythe, Syeda White, Trudelle Wilson and Norma Lopez.

Avril Cunningham



Soon after a resident checks into the New Community Extended Care Center, that individual is visited by Avril Cunningham, the Director of Social Services. Cunningham immediately lets not only the patient, but their family members know that she is there to serve as an advocate on their behalf and handle any issues that might arise.

"I am a mediator between the staff, resident and family. I like advocating for people and it pleases me when I know I have helped somebody and made them happy," explained Cunningham, who has worked at New Community's 180-bed Extended Care Center since 1996, when she came aboard as a social worker.

Rarely in her office, Cunning-

ham is constantly in and out of patient rooms throughout the five-story facility. Some of her duties include arranging transportation to and from medical appointments or to other local offices such as Social Security. The Kean University graduate also shops for personal items, helps to secure clothing if residents are in need and assists with filling out government applications. On occasion, she has even accompanied residents to court.

"I work closely with the nurses to determine what the person may need, whether it is eyeglasses or dental care," said Cunningham, who came to the United States from her native Jamaica when she was 17 years old. "I'm always on the move, but can be paged if someone needs me."

A dentist does regularly visit the Extended Care Center, along with a podiatrist, and there is also a beautician who provides services on site. Two geriatricians also serve as medical director and assistant medical director of the facility, respectively, and there are also physicians from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey who treat residents.

Cunningham, who is in her early 50s, said even individuals who are not very verbal are aware of her presence and have reached out to her for assistance over the years. She is well-liked by the center's residents.

"As far as I'm concerned, she's top dollar," resident Mary Alford, 84, who has been at Extended Care since 2002, said of Cunningham. "She is very nice with a good personality, talks to you with real, good sense and does all kinds of nice things for us," Alford added, explaining Cunningham was currently helping her obtain a replacement part for her television set.

Betty Lawson, administrator of the Extended Care Center, said Cunningham has a real passion for her work.

"Ms. Cunningham is the utmost professional and advocates for our residents as if they were her own family members," she said.

OUR MISSION

To help residents of inner cities improve the quality of their lives to reflect individual, God-given dignity and personal achievement.